

Jesus Christ? Certainly this article did no good. There is always a crowd standing ready and willing to take up any reproach against the Church and I take it that this public article was an imputation against the faithfulness of a large body of the ministers of our Lord, and so I want to enter my protest against such a way of doing business. As the figures given for our Church were not true it is fair to conclude that those given for the other churches were not right.

RESURRECTION—JUDGMENT.

By Rev. William H. Bates, D. D.
I.

In his book, just out, on "The Coming of the Lord," the Rev. James H. Snowden, D. D., professor of Systematic Theology in the Western (Presbyterian) Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pa., gives, in Chapter xii, among thirteen reasons for Postmillenniarism, this: "9. One General Resurrection and Judgment. Postmillenniarism holds that the Scriptures teach that there is to be one general resurrection and judgment, when 'the dead, the great and the small,' shall stand before the throne, and every one shall be judged according to his works" (p. 241).

There are two methods of conducting a disquisition: One is to adduce in order the considerations that lead up to and prove the conclusion at which you wish to arrive; the other is to state your conclusion at the outset, and then present the considerations which support and substantiate it. We will adopt the second method.

Then, as to "one general resurrection and judgment," let us at the outset say, distinctly and unequivocally, there isn't any such thing. The Scriptures do not teach it, but quite otherwise, as we shall see.

Judgments.

1.

Jesus says, John 5:24, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into (R. V.) judgment (krisis)." St. Paul says, Romans 7:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation (kata-krima, down judgment) to them which are in Christ Jesus."

This is the plain record. Accordingly, the believer already "hath everlasting life"—an inalienable possession (John 5:28, 29; 6:39, 40, 44-54); he is "in Christ," "who his own self bore our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). Already "crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20), the penalty of his sins was borne on the cross. There he was judged and acquitted. He is "justified from all things" (Acts 13:39). His debts are all paid and receipted with a carmine seal; and now shall he be brought into court to answer again for those same debts? Nay, verily.

There is no judgment, no kata-krima condemnation for the believer.

2.

The judgment scene of Matthew 25:31-46 has been multitudinously expounded, with an assurance and insistence equaled only by the lack of sense in so doing, as the final judgment, a general judgment, a grand assize, in which all humanity—those then living upon the earth and the rest resurrected from the dead—are to be gathered, their case adjudicated, their destiny adjudged and declared.

This judgment is, on the face of it, an adjudication, the issue undetermined until the case proceeds and is concluded. But who are in it? Certainly not believers who are "in Christ," as we have just seen, for they "shall not come into judgment."

So far as the record goes—and nothing else is admissible here, for we are after what "the Scriptures teach"—the personnel of this judgment consists of the judge and his retinue (Matt. 25:31), "the nations" (vs. 32), and his "brethren" (vs. 40). These, no more, no less. Positively, if any resurrected dead people are there, they have to be read in, for they are not in the record.

It is worth while to note that in the whole book of Matthew only three facts of resurrection are mentioned: "In the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven?" (22:28); Christ's own resurrection (28:6), "and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection" (27:52, 53). If there were to be people, once dead, in this judgment; if the Holy Spirit meant ever to reveal a simultaneous resurrection of all the dead would he not—if this is a general judgment—of all places make the revelation just here? But he did not.

Christ, in his Great Commission (Matt. 28:19), said: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all (R. V.) the nations, baptizing," etc. Do this to dead people? Hardly! According to the Matthew judgment scene, "Before him shall be gathered all (R. V.) the nations" (25:32). Why dead people here any more than in the preceding case? If there are none, what becomes of the "general" judgment?

But who are "the nations?" The Greek word translated "nations," *ethnos* (which enters into our word "ethnology") is used in the New Testament 164 times. It is rendered 93 times Gentiles, 64 times nations, 5 times heathen, 2 times people. My New Testament lexicon gives, for the plural, this definition: "Nations or people, as distinguished from the Jews." In Numbers 23:9 we read: "From the top of the rocks I see him," i. e., collective Israel, and it is added, they "shall not be reckoned among the nations." Says Alford on Matthew 25:32: "The expression all the nations implies all the nations of the world as distinguished from the elect already gathered to him, just as the Gentiles were by that name distinguished from his chosen people the Jews" (p. 176). If the foregoing be correct, then it must be allowed that the Jews are excluded as subjects of this judgment. If the Jews are not in it, if there are no resurrected dead people in it, then the only ones that can be in it, simply and solely, must be the "nations"—"Gentiles"—then living upon the earth. Again, what becomes of the "general" judgment? It is impossible.

3.

While, as we have seen, there are no "believers" in the judgment of Matthew 25, they, nevertheless, according to the judgment of 2 Corinthians, 5:1-10, have an accounting or rendering of their own "for the things done in the body" (vs. 10).

But this is not a "krisis" judgment, an assize, when doom is decided and declared—no, no, that matter is settled when men "believe" unto "everlasting life" (John 5:24)—but simply a time when desert is determined. Nor is it a "throne" (Matt. 25:31; Rev. 20:11) judgment, but a "bema" tribunal ("judgment seat," Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. v. 10), which two things should not be confounded. The question here is not at all as to being "saved," but as to being rewarded. This "judgment" is simply and solely a tribunal of award, and it is for believers only—those translated from the earth (1 Cor. 15:51-53) when Christ comes for his saints and those "in Christ" raised from the dead in the "first resurrection." This is a judgment, not upon the believer's person, but upon his works, awarding rewards therefor.

That only believers are in this "judgment"

should be evident to all those who do not persist in reading into the record what isn't there. "We must all appear before the judgment seat." Who are the "we?" The context determines. "We know . . . we have a building . . . we groan . . . we would be clothed upon . . . we are always confident," we, we, we a round dozen of times in the passage, and none others—the very same "we" in every instance. Who? Believers and believers only, of course. This being so, the general judgment notion seems to be again most effectually disposed of. Dr. Snowden interprets this as a general judgment!! (p. 145).

4.

There remains to be considered the Great White Throne judgment of Revelations 20:11.

This is the final judgment. How this judgment can be confounded with the judgment of Matthew 25 and that one made the last judgment, as is so often done, presents a problem of exegetical obfuscation that is, to me, a psychological puzzle.

1. That is at the second advent of Christ; this "a thousand years" later.

2. That is distinctly and definitely upon the earth (Joel 3:2, 12, R. V.) where "the nations" are; in this, the earth has "fled away" (Rev. 20:11).

3. In that are the then living nations; in this, the dead, and they are yielded up from the sea, death and hades (Rev. 20:13).

4. In that, there are no dead; in this, none but the dead.

5. In that, there is no hint of resurrection; in this, all are resurrected.

6. In that, there is a mixture—sheep and goats; in this, all are of one kind.

7. In that, the judged stand before Christ as "the Son of man" (Matt. 25:31); in this, they "stand before God" (Rev. 20:12).

8. In that there are no "books" of account, but the principle of judgment is the treatment of the "brethren;" in this, "books are opened" and judgment is rendered according to "those things which are written in the books," in which record there can be for uncounted myriads no possible "brethren" debit.

Summary of Judgments.

The Scriptures—uninterpolated and untampered with—plainly teach at least four judgments—the first past, the others future:

1. The judgment of the cross (John 19:17, 18), in which penalty was executed for sin (Gal. 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18), and the believing sinner, because of Christ's expiatory work in his behalf, is acquitted and comes no more into condemnatory judgment (Rom. 8:1; John 5:24).

2. The judgment-seat tribunal, when Christ comes for his saints, and recompense is made to them—the translated and the first resurrection believers—for their works (1 Thess. 4:16, 17; Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 4:5; Rev. 22:2; 1 Cor. 3:8, 13-15; 2 Tim. 4:8).

3. The glory throne judgment, when Christ comes with his retinue of angels and saints (Matt. 25:31; Jude 14:15; 1 Cor. 6:2) to judge the then living nations (Matt. 25:32-46; Joel 3:2-12, R. V.; Zeph. 3:8).

4. The Great White Throne judgment, when is the second resurrection, that of the wicked dead, and sentence is passed upon them (Rev. 20:5, 11-15).

The first was at Calvary, A. D. 30; the second is in the upper regions to which the Church has been translated and occurs at the undated end of this present Church age and the opening of Daniel's seventieth prophetic week; the third is upon the earth at the end of that week; the fourth a thousand years later.

All will be judged indeed, but not all at one